

Jan is a woman of excellence

Duxbury
businesswoman to
be honored Nov. 7

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It's going to be a busy fall for Razia Jan, and she might want to eschew Daylight Savings Time and instead roll the hour hand back a few notches to buy even more time.

On Nov. 7, Jan will receive the 2007 Woman of Excellence distinction from Germaine Lawrence, Inc. for her various endeavors to help women and children in her native Afghanistan. Less than a month later, the Duxbury Rotary Club will host a fundraiser for a school in Afghanistan to provide free education for females. Khaled Hosseini, author of the best-seller "The Kite Runner," highlights the Dec. 2 event at the Duxbury Performing Arts Center.

"My focus is to really make life better for women and girls because they are suffering the most," Jan said.

It's a quiet Monday morning, and Jan has just finished conversing with a customer in Razia's Taylor and Drycleaner on Depot Street in Duxbury. She wears a black floral print shirt and has an understated smile on her face. Her hands are folded except to emphasize a point, and they are at their most animated when she talks about the Zabuli School.

The Zabuli School is Jan's most recent humanitarian venture, and she started fundraising for the project in 2005. Named for the late Abdul Majid Zabuli, a businessman and philanthropist who was committed to improving education in Afghanistan, the school is located 50 kilometers (approximately 31 miles) outside Kabul. Construction of the first floor of the two-story, all-girl school has been completed, and its eight rooms will accommo-

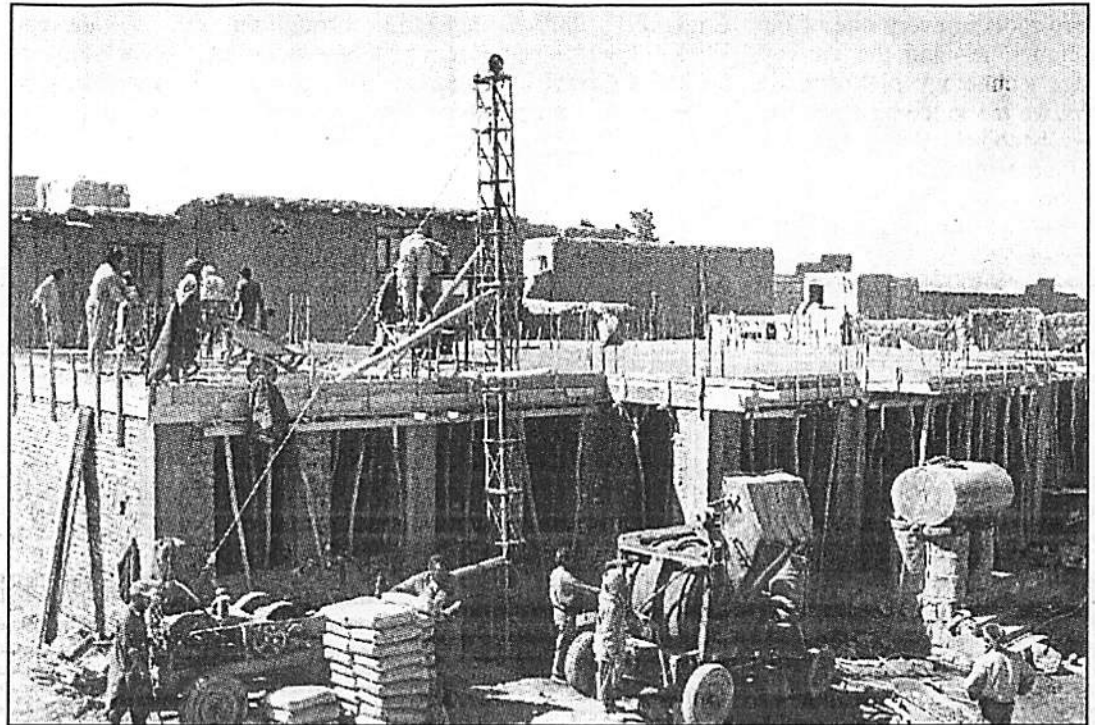


PHOTO COURTESY RAZIA JAN

Construction at the Zabuli School in Afghanistan, a girls school being funded through the efforts of Razia Jan.

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date about 40 students receiving free education.

Jan, who visited the school in late August, said the group needs to raise roughly \$75,000 to complete the project as intended. She hopes to surpass that number and invest the surplus into, among other things, greater salaries for the school's teachers.

"We want to make this a model school," she said. "There are going to be 16-year-old girls who've never gone to school, and the teachers have to bring her where she's supposed to be."

The school will also host after-school programs for neighborhood women to teach them skills, including sewing and baking.

On top of running her shop,

Jan is on Jordan Hospital's board of directors, and she has been a president of the Duxbury Rotary Club. She said her humanitarian work started after Sept. 11, 2001, when she started sending care packages to U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan, and in 2004 she involved herself with the military's Operation Shoefly, which provided 30,000 pairs of shoes to Afghan children.

"Afghan people are very intelligent and hard-working," Jan said. "If you give them a chance, they'll really shine."

Pam Nourse, director of institutional advancement for Germaine Lawrence, Inc., said the award is given to women who have contributed to improving the lives of young women.

"She's really gone above and beyond what most people do to reach out and help those who need help," said Nourse of Jan. "She really shows how one person can make a difference in the lives of lots of other people."

Jan will receive her award in a ceremony at Boston's Harvard Club alongside fellow recipients Barbara Talkov and Massachusetts' First Lady Diane Patrick.

"I'm very honored," she said.

Tickets for the Dec. 2 event are available through the Duxbury Rotary Club. In addition to Hosseini, the program will feature a presentation from Afghan composer Ehsan Aman and a silent auction of primarily Afghan-made items. All proceeds from the auction will go to the Zabuli School and its students.

"These kids are innocent," Jan said. "Many of them have lost their parents, their siblings, and their livelihood. They deserve a lot of help to have a stable life."